



The Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: In support of Governor's FY2026 Budget, Article 5, Sections 4, 7, 10

February 27, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney,

The Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island is a professional organization of rabbinic colleagues that encompasses congregations from all corners of our state and represents the leaders of the majority of the Jewish Community in our state. This includes thousands of households across the entirety of Rhode Island

Our most sacred text, the Torah, details one of the world's earliest social welfare systems. It reminds us to leave the edges of our field for the poor and the stranger in Leviticus 19:9-10 and to open our hands to the needy (Deuteronomy 7-11). We learn that we must always keep those in need in our minds and hearts to support them. Our tradition teaches that our own desire for more should not overwhelm this ethical obligation. Those who have enough should not prioritize their own enrichment over the basic dignity and wellbeing of the poor. Helping fellow human beings in need, tzedakah, is a matter of responsibility and justice.

Our sacred texts teach us to advocate for our most vulnerable, "speak up, judge righteously and champion the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:9) With these words in our hearts we come before you today to speak in support of the Governor's FY2026 Budget, Article 5, Sections 4, 7, 10. A recurring stream of funding dedicated to addressing housing and resources for those experiencing homelessness is an excellent start in addressing this crisis.

As faith leaders, it is our responsibility to stand up for the vulnerable. Our Jewish laws and values compel us to raise our voices in support along with valued community partners who agree that this is an important step towards equity and justice.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Sarah Mack
Immediate Past President, Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island